

OLD
LITHUANIAN
SONGS

Mr. Adrian Paterson, the author of these translations, was formerly Lecturer in the English Language at the University of Vytautas the Great, Kaunas, and he was succeeded by the writer of the introduction, Mr. Martin Lings, from whom he quote the following: "The oldest of the Lithuanian songs, far from being the work of the people as is generally supposed, almost certainly spring from an aristocracy. It is only the materialist outlook which inclines modern people to imagine that the ancients worshipped material objects, whereas, in point of fact, for the ancients, the sun and the moon and other such objects were merely the symbols of higher realities. Then it was taken for granted that the reader or hearer would see beyond the symbol to the reality; to-day, however, for the modern man, the sun and the moon are merely what we see in the sky, and so, attributing his own limitations to his ancestors, he wrongly imagines that they were idolators."

PRIBAČIS. KAUNAS. LITHUANIA

OLD LITHUANIAN SONGS

TRANSLATED BY
ADRIAN PATERSON

Introduction by
Martin Lings

PRIBAČIS KAUNAS

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TO MY MOTHER

FOREWORD.

In considering things traditional there is one point which must always be remembered: we are living in a civilization which is completely antitraditional, unlike all those that have gone before it, and the modern western outlook is based, not on truths which have been handed down from time immemorial, but on various assumptions made quite recently by certain individuals whose thoughts happened to suit the general tendency of the times. Take, for example, the modern western so-called "higher education": it is concerned with facts about details which are simply to be hoarded up in the memory. It is, in fact, learning for learning's sake; and if the various branches of learning be likened to points on the circumference of a circle, the modern idea of advance is to move outwards further and further from the centre; the more a man specializes in „his own subject“, the further he moves from all things else, so that, for example, a modern "advanced" mathematician has no connection at all, as regards study, with a history "specialist" or philosopher or geographer. All

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this is what has been very aptly described¹⁾ as “profane” learning; but in a traditional civilization everything is sacred and learning is never for its own sake but only exists as a means to an end, and that end is knowledge of the Infinite and the Eternal. The sacred sciences, to use the same figure as before, all lead from the circumference towards the one centre, and the more deeply they are studied, the nearer they approach one another, since they are all concerned with creating harmony and serenity in the human soul so that it may be calmed, like water, to receive a reflection of superhuman or intellectual²⁾ light which alone can guide to the Truth.

Such sciences existed in mediaeval Christendom, and still exist to-day among the Hindus, the Chinese, in Thibet, in Islam, and wherever else the tradition has not succumbed to modern western influences; and together with the sacred sciences are the sacred arts, every work of which is simply destined to express some aspect or aspects of the One Truth. This is the sole point of art, which is entirely sacred in

1) René Guénon, *Orient et Occident*, ch. II.

2) The word *intellect*, in its original and proper sense, does not denote a mental faculty at all, but rather the spiritual faculty which connects man with the higher states of existence, and this faculty is dormant in nearly all men of today. See, by the same author, *L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*, p. 49 and also ch. VII.

origin, and modern or "profane" art is simply a degeneration. Thus it has been said¹⁾ that "the profound interest of all so-called popular traditions lies in the fact that they are not popular in origin", and M. Guénon adds, in connection with the Holy Grail²⁾: "Where, as is nearly always the case, there is question of traditional elements in the true sense of the word traditional, however deformed, diminished and fragmentary they may be sometimes, and of things which have a real symbolical value, it is all, far from being popular in origin, not even human in origin. What may be popular is solely the fact of "survivance", when these elements belong to vanished traditional forms, and, in this respect, the term folk-lore takes on a meaning rather close to that of "paganism", only considering the etymology of the latter, without the "polemical" and injurious intention. Thus the people preserve, without understanding them, the relics of former traditions which even go back sometimes to a past too remote for any possible determination, so that it is thought enough, for this reason, to relegate it to the obscure domain of the "prehistoric"; in this it fulfils the function of a sort of collective memory that is more or less subconscious, its

1) Luc Benoist, *La Cuisine des Anges*, p. 74.

2) *Le Saint Graal*, from the February number of *Le Voile d'Isis*, 1934, p. 47.

contents having clearly come from elsewhere¹⁾. What may seem most surprising is that, on closest scrutiny, the things so preserved are found to contain above all, under a more or less veiled form, abundant information of an esoteric order, which is, in its essence, precisely what is least popular; and this fact suggests of itself an explanation which we will just indicate in a few words. When a traditional form is on the point of dying out, its last representatives may very well entrust, if they will, to this aforesaid collective memory, the things that would otherwise be lost without recall; that is in point of fact the sole means of saving what can in a certain measure be saved; and, at the same time, the people's natural lack of understanding is a sure enough guarantee that what was esoteric in character will be none the less undivulged, remaining merely as a sort of witness of the past for such as, in other times, shall be capable of understanding it."

It will be seen at once how closely this quotation bears upon the contents of this volume, which might otherwise have been entitled „Lithuanian Folk Songs“. There can be little doubt that the pre-Christian traditions of Europe

1) That is an essentially "lunar" function, and it is to be noted that, according to astrology, the mass of the people corresponds in fact to the moon, and this indicates, at the same time, their purely passive character, incapable of initiative or spontaneity. R. G.

have vanished except for such fragments as are referred to above; but, since all traditions proceed from the same source, their different forms being like different robes worn by the Truth which is One, it is possible, by studying those traditional doctrines that are still fully alive, to understand something of what these fragments contain. We will not attempt to explain here most of the songs in this book, since such a task would call for a far more detailed knowledge of the other traditions than we possess, and much more time for reflection than we have been allowed. Many of them, especially those towards the end of this volume, which are no doubt not so old as those placed at the beginning, seem to contain a very large admixture of what is popular. But there are at least some of the earlier ones which, far from being mere fragments, seem to be full sacred poems that date from a time when the tradition was still flourishing, and we will dwell a little on these, since there is much to be said about them.

All the traditions look back to an age when the earth was a paradise for man, and they all teach that at a certain time man lost his most precious possession, which can only be regained with great difficulty by increasingly fewer of earth's inhabitants, and that since then he has gradually degenerated more and

more, while earthly conditions, having grown worse and worse, will continue to do so until, by divine intervention, the „Edenic“ state is restored once more. What man has lost is sometimes described as the „third eye“ or the “eye of the heart”; without this faculty, which is, in fact, the intellect in the true sense of the word, man is shut within this world, being barred from all spiritual knowledge and unable to look into eternity. Now this world is the world of the soul, and the soul itself in all traditions is symbolized by the moon, just as the spirit is symbolized by the sun. Thus, in the first song, which begins:

“Moon took to be his bride
Sun in the first spring-tide“,

the marriage of the sun and the moon signifies man in his primordial state, the primordial hermaphrodite as he is sometimes called, in full possession his twofold nature, divine and human. The world of the spirit, which is made up of the different heavens, is the world of unity, just as this is the world of duality, and by losing his sight of heaven man lost the sense of unity, which explains the significance of the words “cleft him in two”; this corresponds to what, in the three latest traditions, Judaeism, Christianity and Islam, is described as eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that is, becoming subject to duality; and

it will be remembered, in connection with the Lithuanian version, that Lucifer was none other than the Morning Star, whose fall from heaven song IV clearly refers to. It is also interesting to remember in this connection a passage in Plato's Symposium where Aristophanes speaks about primordial men, who, according to the Greek tradition, were hermaphrodites until the time came when Zeus, whose power is symbolized by thunder, cut men in two.

The sole purpose of the various traditions is to teach such men as are capable how to regain the lost sense of eternity, either in this life or after death, and this task is usually represented as a difficult journey, past many obstacles and through many ordeals, back to the lost centre, which is the meeting point of heaven and earth. Now heaven and earth, the world of the spirit and the soul, are termed by the traditions the "Upper Waters" and the "Lower Waters" respectively; their origin, the division of the waters, is thus described at the beginning of Genesis; and this explains the frequent references in traditional writings to two waters or seas, as, for example, in the Qoran, where it is written that Moses said to his servant: "I will not stop till I reach the confluence of the two seas, or for years will I journey on"¹). It is at this confluence that the

1) *Surat-el-Kahf* (the Cave), v. 60. See also *Surat-el-Furqan*, v. 55.

Tree of Life grows, and here also springs the Fountain of the Waters of Life; and to eat of the tree or drink of the waters is to regain this lost sense of eternity. The first verse of the song on page 34, "Where the deep meets the shallows", seems clearly to refer to this centre which must be reached; as to the rest of the song, it is hard to know what to make of it, unless it signifies an attempt to gain spiritual knowledge which almost, though not quite, succeeded. It is interesting, however, to note that among the Druids also the Tree of Life was represented by the oak¹); and it may well be that the tradition which produced these songs was closely connected with the Celtic one.

The lost centre is also often symbolized by a garden, such as, for example, the Garden of Eden, or the Garden of the Muses with its Fountain of Helicon and its sacred laurel tree. In the Lithuanian tradition it seems that the Tree of Life is often, as it were, replaced by the plant rue, whose evergreen nature makes it a symbol of immortality; thus the so often mentioned rue garden signifies the earthly paradise, and in the song on page 10 it may be that the whirlpool is the equivalent of the fountain. Now

1) See René Guénon, *Le Symbolisme de la Croix*, ch. IX, and also *L'Homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*. p. 68,

the hawk, with other birds of its tribe, above all the eagle¹⁾, is essentially a bird of the sun, being a symbol of the spirit which „descends“ upon the soul so soon as the soul has reached the necessary state of tranquillity. This state is described in the traditions also as a state of childlikeness, of psychic death, of simplicity, of virginity, and of spiritual poverty, and the maiden's condition is one which recalls the words “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted” and „Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven“. Her extreme poverty signifies her lack of attachment to earthly things, which enables her to pray whole-heartedly for spiritual riches and to receive them. The moon, in its benefic sense, symbolizes perfection of the human or individual nature, after the soul has died and been born again, and the words “apportion my share” bear out the symbolism very clearly, since the function of the soul's faculties is analytical²⁾, belonging to the world of measurement

1) It will be remembered that in the Christian tradition the eagle is used to represent St. John who, most of all the apostles, stands for what is esoteric.

2) A symbol is not something arbitrarily chosen but is based on the knowledge of the correspondences between the things in the different worlds, each world being analogous in every respect to the others. This knowledge is clearly not human, but was possessed by man in his primordial state. It will be remembered too that Adam is said to have given things their names which are also symbols; and the symbolical connection between various things in this world, which

in time and space, as apposed to the function of the spirit, which is synthetic, as the words "gather me a dowry" imply.

The song on page 12, where, as so often, there is mention of something lost, may refer in its last stanza, to the different periods of this cycle of humanity¹). According to the traditions, and the Hindu doctrine gives the most detailed information on this point, each cycle is divided into four ages, which were known to the Romans as the Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages, each one being considerably shorter than the last. Within this period, at moments when the world or some part of it appears to be on the brink of chaos, the Divinity descends eight times to restore order, and the end of each Iron Age, when the disorder

clearly could not be known from within this world, may be inferred even from the modern languages, which however degenerate they are, all spring from the one primordial language which comes by divine revelation. It may be noted, for example, how persistently the root MN occurs, in European languages, where things specifically human are concerned, as in the words *man*, *moon*, *memory* (Lithuanian *mintis*), the lost N being found in English in the word *reminiscence*), *mind* (Latin *mens*, the faculty which analyses its function being defined by the Lithuanian *manyti* and the German *meinen*), *measure* (Latin *mensura*), and also in the name of *minerva*, the Roman goddess of indirect human knowledge, whos bird is the owl, nocturnal and lunar, as opposed to the eagle which is the bird of Phoebus Apollo, the god of direct spiritual knowledge.

1) For more information see the article by René Guénon. *Quelques remarques sur la doctrine des cycles cosmiques*, the October number of *Etudes Traditionnelles*, 1938.

being no doubt an offshoot, like the Celtic and Hindu traditions, of the great primordial tradition which is said to have come from the North Pole¹). Indeed, in the Vedic hymns of the Hindu tradition there is the clearest possible evidence, through frequent references to long days and nights and long dawns and sunsets, that its people lived in some region of the Arctic²); and, among these songs, the one on page 4, where the sun is described as being for a long time out of man's sight, seems to suggest that the Lithuanian people also once lived in such a region. Incidentally, it will be remembered that of the living European languages, Lithuanian is the closest to Sanscrit; and there is a remarkable illustration of this in the song in question, for the opening words, *Dievo dukrytė* (God's daughter), would be, in Sanscrit, *Dēva-duktrī*.

We have said almost all that we can about the contents of this volume, and it is to be hoped that subsequently others, looking also

1) It may be remembered, incidentally, that even modern geologists agree that the present severity of the Arctic climate is due to a cataclysmic change in the surface of the earth and that in earlier ages the climate of those regions must have been quite mild; but naturally the tradition does not need to be corroborated by modern so-called „authorities“, and we merely mention this for the sake of those who, looking from an antitraditional standpoint, might find at first glance something incredible in the above statement about the primordial tradition.

2) See *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, by B. G. Tilak.

from the traditional standpoint but possessing greater knowledge of these and other such relics, will be able to throw more light upon the sacred art of the Lithuanian tradition. But there is one more point which calls for immediate explanation in connection with these songs, and this is that in Lithuanian¹⁾ the sun is feminine and the moon masculine, whereas in most traditions the sun, representing the spirit which in relation to the soul is active, is masculine and the moon feminine. But this depends upon the point of view; and from another point of view the spirit is passive in relation to a still higher principle which transcends the worlds of manifestation symbolized by the two waters, and which in Lithuanian is represented by Perkunas, the god of thunder. Also, the pilgrim himself, from his own point of view, appears to be active on his journey in quest of what remains static; and thus the spirit is often represented by a woman (as in many esoteric narratives, some of which have only come down to us in the form of „fairy stories“), whose hand can only be won after the suitor has passed through many ordeals. Often there is a combination of symbols, and it will be remembered, for example, that Hippomenes was only able to win the hand of

1) This is also the case in Arabic and in German.

Atalanta by means of the golden apples from the Garden of Hesperus, or in other words, by means of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and in the Divine Comedy it is only when Dante reaches the centre of the Earthly Paradise, on the top of the Mountain of Purgatory, that he comes face to face with Beatrice. From this point, according to all traditional teaching, the spirit may guide the pilgrim through the different heavens and beyond them to the final state of Supreme Identity with the Truth, which is what the Hindus describe as the state of a *Yogi*, the Chinese as of *Sheun Jenn* (Divine Man), and the Moslems as of a *Sufi* or of Universal Man. It is the same as that which St. Bernard describes as the state of loving God with the Love with which He loves Himself, and beyond this, which is the End that all traditions lead to, there is nothing that can be desired.

MARTIN LINGS

Kaunas, June 1939.

We must take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude to M. René Guénon and of acknowledging a little of what we owe to his works, not only to those referred to in the foreword, but also to this *Introduction générale à l'Étude des Doctrines hindoues*, *Les États multiples de l'Être*, *L'Ésotérisme de Dante*, *Le Roi du Monde*, and *La Crise du Monde moderne*, together with his numerous articles in *Le Voile d'Isis*, or, as it is now entitled, *Études Traditionnelles*. Without these, as is clear, the foreword could never have been written; and indeed, as far as we know, there are no other works through which modern western people may gain understanding of the eastern traditional doctrines. The texts of these traditions, springing from a point of view that is far beyond the reach of modern so-called „philosophy“, are too difficult for a first hand study by anyone who is hampered, like nearly all Westerners of to-day, with the prejudices of the antitraditional outlook.

We have also been asked by Mr. Paterson to express his gratitude to Mr. Emanuel Wolfson

for the help given in revising these translations; and we would like also to join in thanking the editors „Pribačis“ for their kindly interest and encouragement, without which this volume would never have appeared.

M. L.

Many of these Lithuanian songs, which lie before us in their English translation, are undoubtedly the product of an ancient and highly intellectual aristocracy. We have tried as far as possible to render the grace of cadence and delicacy of imagery of the originals, and for this reason we have avoided regular rhymes, which would have given an effect too hard and glib; instead we have done our best to reproduce something of the Lithuanian assonance, and incidentally, though this is a minute point, the avoidance of capital letters at the beginning of every line is also in imitation of the Lithuanian. We mention this lest the English reader should attribute these irregularities to modernist tendencies. As to the value of the translations, it is needless to say that from an aesthetic point of view the poems have lost much in being translated; but for us, as almost certainly for the authors themselves, the aesthetic point of view is only secondary*; what is important is

* This does not mean that the authors were negligent in this respect. The words of Christ, „Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all the rest shall be added unto you“ are susceptible of many applications; and it is precisely because the authors sought above all to express spiritual truths that their works have such remarkable beauty and harmony.

the accurate preservation of the symbolic qualities, and we trust that the texts have been faithfully enough adhered to for these to be apparent.

ADRIAN PATERSON

Cairo, July, 1939

OLD LITHUANIAN SONGS

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I

Moon took to be his bride
Sun in the first spring tide.

When Sun woke up at dawn,
Moon from her side was gone.

Moon, as alone he roved,
Morn's Star beheld and loved.

Then Thunder, wroth, with His blade
cleft him in two and said:

Why didst abandon Sun?
Why, Morn's Star's minion,
by night didst rove alone?

II

Belovèd Sun, God's daughter,
where so long tarriest thou,
where so long dwellest thou
when from us removst thyself?

Behind seas, behind mountains
I shelter homeless waifs,
I keep warm the shepherds.

Belovèd Sun, God's daughter,
who of a morning kindleth
thy fire? Who at evening
prepareth thy bedding?

The Morning Star, the Evening 'Star.
Morn's Star kindles my fire,
Eve's Star prepares my bedding.
Many are my kith and kin,
many are my gifts and boons.

III

Morn's Star held a wedding feast.
Thunder galloped through the gate
and struck down a green oak tree.

The blood of the green oak tree trickled,
and stained my apparel,
and stained my garland.

The Sun's daughter wept,
and for three years gathered
withered foliage.

And where, o mother mine,
shall I wash my apparel,
where wash away the blood?

O daughter mine, so youthful,
go to the lake there yonder
where are poured the streams of nine rivers.

And where, o mother mine,
shall I dry my apparel
where in the wind shall I dry it? -

O daughter mine, so youthful,
in yonder garden green
where are flowering nine roses.

And when, o mother mine,
shall I put on my apparel,
put it on in its whiteness?

O daughter mine, so youthful,
on that same day of singing
when there shall shine nine suns.

IV

Sun, 'tis time you went
over the firmament.
Sun, 'tis time to fare
thorough the air.
Sun, 'tis time you counted
if all the stars be mounted.

Whether I count or no,
already one will not show,
and that the star most bright
which rose up with the light
and retired late at night.

V

Hail to Thee, dear God,
great sower of the sod!

Grant the sheaf yield!
Far my cares drive!
Let the harvest thrive
in the open field!

Oh scatter the seed
through the green mead!
And I beg Thee feed
both ram and steed.

To God in offering
an armful I'll bring.

Sons He does raise
to be my delight,
for my head white
they'll tend in my old days.

A horse too He does rear
my heart to cheer.

VI

Fly, little hawk,
near to the lake,
near that same lake
where a whirlpool seethes.

Near to that whirlpool
there's a rue garden.
In that same garden
weeps a maiden.

I have no mother
a dowry to gather,
I have no father
to apportion my share.

I have no brother
to saddle horses,
I have no sister
to plait a garland.

Sun, thou mother,
Sun, thou mother,
Sun, thou mother,
gather me a dowry!

Moon, thou father,
Moon, thou father,
Moon, thou father,
apportion my share!

Star, thou sister,
Star, thou sister,
Star, thou sister,
oh plait my garland!

Greatwain, thou brother,
Greatwain, thou brother,
Greatwain, thou brother,
oh drive me through the meadows!

VII

Yesterday at sundown
my lamb from the sheep pen strayed.
Ah me, will no one aid
in finding my one lamb?

I went and asked Morn's Star.
Morn's Star replied:
In the early morntide
the Sun's fire I must kindle.

I went and asked Eve's Star.
Eve's Star replied:
The Sun's bed at eventide
I have to make ready.

I went and asked the Moon.
The Moon replied:
A sword has cleft my side,
sad is my appearance.

I went and asked the Sun.
The Sun replied:
Nine days I'll search far and wide;
on the tenth I'll not set even.

VIII

Thou goat of sable beard,
grow, grow, grow!
Our Deity for thee
waits, waits, waits.
By a river bank and a hill
where a fire, like a star,
by day, by night, burns, burns, burns;
there Ruginis with Gvaginis
goats for God chokes, chokes, chokes.

When the rye's reaped and sown,
we will take thee sable-bearded
to that same hill,
to that same hill
where Ruginis with Gvaginis
to the glory and honour of our God
will even strangle thee,
will even strangle thee.

IX

There had come, there had come,
there had come here
from the town of Gilia
a ship of juniper.

Then my old father
I asked to tell
where the ship to steer,
where to set sail.

Should it be for the deep
or for the shallows?
Neither for the deep
nor for the shallows!

But for an open port
where dwells a maid
in a lofty cottage,
her trim homestead.

There the fair maid stays,
daughter of the days,
weaving and ravelling
and embroidering

From the very corners
in circles of thread
many a red
and green flower head,

And in the middle,
right in the middle,
a yellow sun
with the stars little.

X

When I was with my mother
I worked not in the house,
but instead I railed the garden
in green maple boughs.

Rue I sowèd, mint I sowèd,
I sowèd lily too,
and I sowèd my young days
like the green rue.

Rue burgeoned, mint burgeoned,
lily burgeoned too,
and my young days took on bud
like the green rue.

Rue I watered, mint I watered,
I watered lily too,
and I watered my young days
like the green rue.

Rue blossomed, mint blossomed,
lily blossomed too,
and my young days took on blossom
like the green rue.

Rue I gathered, mint I gathered,
I gathered lily too,
and I gathered my young days
like the green rue.

I made rue garlands, I made mint garlands
and lily garlands too.
I made a garland of my young days
like the green rue.

But then there came a village youth
with iron sickle head,
bent on mowing my young days
like the green rue bed.

Rue he scythed, mint he scythed,
he scythed lily too,
and he scythed my young days
like the green rue.

Rue I raked in, mint I raked in,
I raked in lily too,
and I raked in my young days
like the green rue.

Rue witherèd, mint witherèd,
lily witherèd too,
and my young days withered away
like the green rue.

Rue they bore off, mint they bore off,
they bore off lily too,
and they bore off my young days
like the green rue.

XI

Go where green, where green,
where green the wood,
where in the wood
a dark tower is hid,

where in the wood
a dark tower is hid,
go where a stripling
sits in that tower.

He does not know yet
of winter cold,
of winter cold,
nor of the summer.

He does not know yet
of daylight breaking,
of daylight breaking,
of the Sun's waking.

Oh cast I would, cast I would
a golden wedge
and send it past, I would,
the window ledge,

and send it past, I would,
the window ledge,
that he may know soon
of daylight breaking,

that he may know soon
of daylight breaking,
of daylight breaking,
of the Sun's waking!

Oh cast I would, cast I would
a ball of snow,
that of cold winter
he may now know!

Oh cast I would, cast I would
a marjoram broom,
that he may know now
summer is come!

XII

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what's black and yet not wrought so?

I were no maid at all
if I could not tell
what's black and yet not wrought so.

The crow black of hood,
bird of the wood;
that's black and yet not wrought so.

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what's garish, yet not painted?

I were no maid at all,
if I could not tell
what's garish, yet not painted.

The garish woodpie
that in glades does fly;
that's garish, yet not painted.

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what's born without speech?

I were no maid at all,
if I could not tell
what's born without speech.

On the hilltop high
the boulder grey;
that's born without speech.

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what flies without wings?

I were no maid at all,
if I could not tell
what flies without wings.

The North wind, as it passes
over the meadow grasses;
that flies without wings.

The black cloud when it flees
over the tops of the trees;
that flies without wings.

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what runs without feet?

I were no maid at all,
if I could not tell
what runs without feet.

Upon sea and ocean
the black ship in motion;
that runs without feet.

Say canst guess, canst guess,
o youthful maiden,
what's green in winter and summer?

I were no maid at all,
if I could not tell
what's green in winter and summer.

The pine tree, the yew tree
and the green rue tree;
those are green in winter and summer.

XIII

A maple tree stands near
springs of water clear,
where go the daughters of the Sun
to wash their faces at dawn.

By this maple in that stream
to wash my face I came;
washing my beauteous skin,
I washed my ring in.

A son of the god came near
with silk fishing gear,
and they fished out my ring
from the bottom of the spring.

Then a youth rode near
on a chestnut mare,
and that chestnut steed
with gold shoes was shod.

Come, hither, my bride,
come, maiden, to my side!
Let us talk together,
let us think together
where the stream is deepest,
where love loveliest!

O youth, I cannot go,
mother would scold me so,
mother of the hair grey,
that so long I stayed away.

XIV

From Rusne's town
two young fishermen
sailed forth, did sail forth.

They cast, they did cast
into ocean vast
delicate tackle

and they did get
in each double net
a sea calf, a sea calf.

'Neighbour, neighbour mine,
dear companion,
what are these wondrous fishes?'

Then the sea deity
became angry
and the North wind got up.

'Neighbour, neighbour mine,
dear companion,
drop our golden anchor!

From its anchor of gold
let the craft be rolled
by the foamy billows.

Neighbour, neighbour mine,
dear companion,
climb up the mast!

Then you'll see perhaps
dunes and hilltops
and pine trees frail.'

'I see no dune head,
no dune or hill,
no pine tree frail,
but I do see
my beloved.'

XV

Oh I was bidden, I was bidden
by my stepmother* go
for winter green stuff
and summer snow.

And weeping sadly,
as I walked in vain,
I chanced on a youth,
a shepherd swain.

‘And wither wilt thou,
my little maiden,
and wherefore weapest,
my little maiden?’

* Anytèle literally means a mother-in-law.

'Oh I'm bidden, I'm bidden
by my stepmother go
for winter green stuff
and summer snow.'

'Go, little maiden,
go, young one, go
where the wood borders
on the sea's flow.

There thou wilt come on
a green yew. Take home
boughs of that yew tree
and a handful of sea foam.

For thy stepmother
thou'lt have fetched so
winter green stuff
and summer snow.'

XVI

Three lime trees in a swamp,
all growing from one stump.

Among these limes by the stream
three maidens wandering came.

The boughs two sisters seized
and in between them squeezed.

But the last was unable to
and fell into the flow.

Her the current carried
towards the Niemen wide.

Her the Niemen did not want
and to the Rusne sent.

Her the Rusne did not want
and to its estuary sent.

Her the estuary would not keep
and bore out to the deep.

Her the ocean would not keep
and back to the shore did sweep.

There into a lime tree green
she grew with branches nine.

Her brother came a flute
to cut from a lime shoot.

My flute plays beautifully,
its voice speaks mournfully.

But his mother said to him:
That voice is not from the lime;

that's the soul of my daughter,
swimming upon the water.

XVII

Where the deep meets the shallows
a steep holm lies,
and on the holm, on that holm,
a green oak does rise.

Once, when young, I swam out to it
and clambered up on to it:
Oh turn thyself, oak tree,
into my father!

Oh turn those green branches
to fingers white
and that green foliage
into words sweet!

Once, when young, I went away from it
and wept much over it;
for the oak never turned
into my father,

nor turned those green branches
to fingers white
nor that green foliage
into words sweet.

XVIII

BOY

Why so sad, guelder rose, why so sad?
Why so sad, o green one, why so sad?
Thou didst grow up amid trees,
'twixt thy boughs hast gathered foliage;
why so sad?

GIRL

Why am I sad, mountain ash, why am I sad?
Why am I sad, o green one, why am I sad?
Wind has destroyed my leaves,
the cold hoar frost my flowers;
therefore I'm sad.
Why so sad, o clover, why so sad?
Why so sad, o clover, why so sad?
Thou didst grow up by thy father,
didst feed the horse with thy brothers;
why so sad?

BOY

Why am I sad, maiden, why am I sad?

Why am I sad, o lily, why am I sad?

Away they are leading my horse,
away they are chasing me, so young;
therefore I'm sad.

Why so sad, sister, why so sad?

Why so sad, o lily, why so sad?

Thou didst grow up by thy mother,
didst gather a dowry with thy sisters;
why so sad?

GIRL

Why am I sad, o stripling, why am I sad?

Why am I sad, o clover, why am I sad?

They are carrying my dowry through the field
and me, so young, to sorrow;
therefore I'm sad.

XIX

Thus I have addressed mother before,
so spoken for half a summer and more:
Go, mother, and seek thee a spinnester,
thee a spinnester and a webbester!

Already I have spun the flax white,
already woven the linen light,
already raked in the hay from the lea lands,
already mown the rye on the high lands.

O maiden garland of green rue,
not long wilt thou be green upon my brow!
Tresses mine with ribbon of green silk,
the Sun will not warm you or make
you shine now!

Nor will you part now at the wind's blowing,
you, my dear locks, so yellow of tone;

XX

See, the dawn does break now
and the Sun appear!
Wake, daughter, wake now!
Guest, to me most dear,
of sleep you have had full share.

Go now, rue foliage get you!
The wedding guests are here.
And then a garland plait you,
for your brothers fair
are saddling the black mare!

In the farmyard I stood.
I sat down in the waggon.
And now farewell for good,
dear father, dear mother,
farewell, sister and brother!

As I drew near the farm,
my mother-in-law's threshold,
then I did behold
sorrow, my sorrow
on my mother-in-law's threshold.

I wished my brother there
with his sword drawn;
I wished he would cut down
sorrow, my sorrow
from my mother-in-law's threshold.

My brother came here
with his gleaming sword,
and he drew it and cut down
the doorway board,
but not my sorrow.

Those gates sorrow opened then.
Ah, my sorrow spread then,
sorrow, ah, spread then,
sorrow flourished then,
sorrow flowered on the farmstead then!

XXI

Gently on, gently on the Niemen creeps;
not so gently, though, as mother weeps.

Would I knew wherefore mother weeps!
Would I could guess why my mother weeps!

Dear mother's head I would array
and I would kiss her hair so grey.

Perhaps mother for her child does sorrow
whom her father gives to woe to-morrow.

Gently on, gently on the Niemen creeps;
not so gently, though, as mother weeps.

XXII

The horses are harnessed
and stand now by the door;
adieu, adieu, dear sister,
we shall not see you more.

See, may be we shall see you!
Meet, may be we shall meet you,
but with this same company
we shall not visit you!

For your white wimple
and unbraided tresses
suit not with a garland
and golden laces.

Your dear mother weeps now,
shedding many a tear.
Who will care for the old dame
when you are no more here?

Your rue's weep and sigh, trembling
though no wind does shake them,
for by white hands they'll not be seen
which once did rake them.

Go, see how thy flowers
one and all look sad!
Perhaps they feel, perhaps they know
that they are orphanèd.

Who now will talk with them,
who sing them lays?
The cold will nip and freeze them
even as your own days.

Are you not sorry to part
from your old mother too?
What evening will you not fly here
on the wings of a cuckoo?

At least you'll moan by day,
at least tremble by night,
yet you'll not sigh all the while
for your mother's sad plight.

Under your mother's wing
you opened like a bud.
Then you did tend the garland
and the rue bed.

You'll have no joy now
even with us, sister.
More the sorrows, more the crosses
you'll patiently endure.

Adieu, adieu, sister,
now we must separate;
waiting are the black-maned horses,
waiting before the gate.

Man, little man,
consider the bee.
You have enough that smarts
in your heart, your little heart;
give at least what is sweet
in it to your brother!
That is man's business.

XXIV

Nightingale,
beautiful bird,
why this morn early
hast not twittered?

How this morn early
had I twittered?
My nest was destroyed
by the shepherd.

My nest was destroyed
by the shepherd,
my fledglings stolen
by the hawk bird.

The hills I flew among,
I roosted in scaurs,
I built my homestead
in the osiers.

A rumour of me
men spread around;
they said I fed myself
in the corn ground.

They said I fed myself
in the corn bed.
They said the bay horse
I had frightened

'Twas not I took food
from the corn bed.
Not by me the bay horse
was frightened.

Shepherds drove their flocks
through the corn bed.
The bay horse by shepherds
was frightened.

XXV

O rue tree, rue tree,
rue tree so green,
why winter and summer
wert thou not green?

How winter and summer
could I have been green,
since no sister sowed me
the garden soil between?

Since mid in meadow
they sowed me,
mid in meadow
on a hill top high.

There ploughmen ploughed
and trampled with their feet;
there shepherds drove to pasture
and with whipthongs beat.

Had your sister sown me
the garden soil between,
then winter and summer
I would have been green.

XXVI

Nine sons a father
once did rear,
and his tenth child
was a daughter dear.

Nine branches an oak tree
forth did put,
and a small tree top
was its tenth shoot.

But those nine sons
war did slaughter.
At least, God, guard well
the dear daughter,
that there be somewhere
to lean the head,
that the heart in its sorrow
may be comforted!

And those nine branches
the wind did lop.
At least, God, guard well
the small tree top,

that there the cuckoo
cuckoo may sing,
that there the nightingale
may perch, twittering!

XXVII

My mother brought up
the three of us as one,
but me through the country
she let go alone.

Three days, three whole days
I went my road;
three nights, three whole nights
I lay in the wood.

There I listened and heard
a voice in the wood:
it seemed, so I deemed,
that my mother hulloed.

There shouted, there waited
no mother in the wood.
It was only a cuckoo
that sadly cuckooed.

My father brought up
the three of us as one,
but me through the country
he let go alone.

Three days, three whole days
I went my road;
three nights, three whole nights
I lay in the wood.

There I listened and heard
a voice in the wood:
it seemed, so I deemed,
that my father hulloed.

There shouted, there waited
no father in the wood.
It was only a bull calf
that sadly lowed.

XXVIII

Ah groaning, groaning
was the North Wind!
Ah moaning, moaning
a young village hind!

Then ceased from groaning
the North Wind;
then ceased moaning
the young village hind.

O sorrow, sorrow,
sorrow mine, I pray
I may soon sorrow
you utterly away!

Yet when I did pass
along the highway,
there my sorrow was
in mid roadway.

Five score brothers thundered,
on down the street,
trampling with four hundred
war horses feet.

Oh then I implorèd
that brotherhood
my sorrow to tread
hard under foot.

I begged them to crush it,
my sorrow, with their might;
I asked them to slash it
with their swords bright.

Crushing, they crushed it;
with swords they slashed it;
but my sorrow cared not
that they had lashed it,

but my sorrow cared not,
paid that no heed.
Its trunk swoll instead
and leaves burgeonèd.

Its leaves burgeoned
and its branches spread,
for my sorrow cared not,
paid that no heed.

When of my mother
I go the way,
then I shall sorrow
my sorrow away.

My darling mother
on the hilltop high,
on the hilltop high
in new grave does lie.

I shall only sorrow
my sorrow away
when of my dear mother
I go the way.

XXIX

Hapless one I,
maiden most sad,
who to sad sorrow
am accustomed.

If only I had
a mother still,
a mother still,
to look after me well

But my old mother
yonder lies deep
beneath yellow sands
on the hill steep.

Upon her tombstone
the dew at dawn
as though it were silver
has brightly shone,

and above her tablet
a gray cuckoo
has cuckooed each morning
and evening too,

till daughter from father,
daughter from father,
sister from brother
it cuckooed away
to be their envoy
by that aged mother,

XXX

'And where wast thou,
o lover mine?'

'Fishing for fishes
on the sea's brine.'

'Tell me, my darling,
if thou didst catch
that fish of fishes,
the spotted perch.'

'My nets I was cleaning,
my hands washing,
when from my ring-finger
off slipped a ring.

For the ring snatching,
I stumbled too
into the ocean.
O maid, to the rescue!

My bride, to the rescue
if this once only!
'I would come readily
but there's no ship near
nor maple with which to steer.

Still in the forest
my ship is a root;
the rudder of maple
is not even a shoot.'

XXXI

No one understands
a beautiful riddle,
unless they muse upon it.

Rocks are without roots,
water is without wing
and ferns are without flowers.

Even so myself,
a young maiden,
am without a young man.

I shall sell a ring
and a garland
and look for a ploughman.

And a young lad
answered
near the green rue bed:

Sell no ring
and no garland!
I will be a ploughman.

Cold is winter,
cold is autumn,
cold am I, lying alone.

I will sell a horse
and a bridle
and I'll buy a spindle.

And the young maid
answerèd
near the green rue bed:

Sell no horse
and no bridle!
Hire no spindle!

I will be a spinster,
I will be a weaver,
and a binder of rye.

Finely I'll spin,
closely I'll weave
smocks for a young man.

XXXII

Through a forest flowed a stream;
near it a pleasant farm stood.
A black crow settled there
and to peck there called her brood.

They had had food enough
where swords had gleamed in the fight.
Her beak held a white hand
on which a ring shone bright.

'From where, crow, do you come
you and all your offspring?
Where did you find that white hand
which in your beak you bring?'

'Maid, there was a great battle
beyond the forest ride.
Bullets flew by, swords glittered
and many youths died.

Men dug a grave and buried
the bodies of all in the hole.
Then on their fallen brothers
they strewed the sandy soil.

Wolves rent the carcasses
and howled round the skeletons
and mothers stumbled on hands
weeping for their sons.'

When she heard this, the maiden
her hands did raise
and moaned and wept bitterly
and covered her face.

'I know now who is dead
and whose the hand is:
that ring was mine, given
to a youth for his.'

XXXIII

Once three sisters had a young brother,
who was forced to ride to the great wars,
who was forced to ride to the great wars.

The first sister made ready for her brother,
the second went and saddled his horse,
the second went and saddled his horse,

while the third lifted up the gate,
lifted up the gate and watched him out of
sight,
lifted up the gate and watched him out of
sight.

The sisters waited for him on a high hill,
for him to return from the great fight,
for him to return from the great fight.

Standing, they wore away a hole in the hill,
with their tears they wore away an ash gate,
with their tears they wore away an ash gate.

A horse galloped by with stirrups rattling.
You have no brother, there is no need to
wait,
you have no brother, there is no need to
wait.

XXXIV

O cherry, cherry,
cherry tree dear,
why dost not blossom
in winter, in winter?

Frost freezes my blossom,
my blossom, my blossom,
wind cracks my branches,
my green branches.

O brother, brother,
my brother dear,
why dost not gallop,
being young, to the war?

O sister, sister,
my sister dear,
sister, thou knowest not
how cruel is war.

There stand regiments
many a regiment,
like the black cloud banks
in the firmament.

There swords, many a sword,
many a sword glitters
as in the high firmament
the brightest stars.

There bullets, bullets,
many a bullet flies,
as in father's garden
the bees, the bees.

XXXV

Come, sing, sister!
Why art not singing,
why are tears on thy hands,
why thy hands art wringing?

Where should I sing now?
Rejoice how should I?
No scents are in the garden,
no scents in the shrubbery.

All the rue is gathered,
all the roses withered
and all the lilies blown,
all the dew gone.

Did North wind blow
or stream over flow?
Did thunder crash
or lightning flash?

North wind did not blow
nor stream over flow,
and thunder did not crash
to the lightning's flash.

Bearded men,
men from far shores,
wandering o'er the plain,
scaled the garden doors.

They gathered the rue
and the roses too.
The lilies they scattered
and they spilled the dew;

and I myself
hardly endured,
when the rue boughs were plucked,
when my garland was dead.

XXXVI

Why mourns the cuckoo
in the guelder rose?
Why the nightingale too?

Then a horseman appears,
my young brother,
in silver spurs.

Why do you stand there?
Why do you not ride?
Long mother waited near.

Well, may she wait and yearn.
Yet now she waits no more
for she knows I'll not return,

that I'll not swim the straight
nor drown in the sea
nor wander through the night.

Dear brother mine,
dear clover mine,
where will you spend this night?

Under the yew in the wood,
under the lime in the glade,
under their branches spreading.

Dear brother mine,
dear clover mine,
who has prepared your bedding?

Oh who has prepared
your garish bedding?
By whom was your bed aired?

My bedding was prepared
by the North wind
and by the early wind aired;

and my dear horse,
my black-maned one,
stood there upon the moors,

and my saddle,
my leather one,
lay there upon my horse.

XXXVII

In my father's homestead
I'm an only son now,
suffering many woes:

for when I returned
to my aged father's
after the long war,

entering the house,
I found no father
and no aged mother.

I went into the barn
and there found no sister
among her bright chests.

I looked at the hook
and on it was no garland
and no green ribbons.

I went to the stables
and in them found no brother
and no bay horse.

I went into the garden
and there found no oak tree
and no green foliage.

Alas, of the oak tree
my father's tombstone,
of the green oak!

And from the lime tree
my mother's tomb,
from its white wood!

XXXVIII

On a bridge I rode
when I fell off my horse;
and I lay in the mud,

and I was left lying there
for three whole weeks.
No one seemed to care.

There neared me in flight
three speckled cuckoos
one dark midnight.

The first cuckoed
about my feet,
the second about my head

and the third did start,
of those speckled cuckoos,
to sing about my heart.

My beloved at my feet,
at my head my sister,
my mother by my heart.

My beloved shed tears
for three whole weeks,
my sister for three whole years.

Tears my mother shed,
she who nurtured me,
while life was in her head.

My bride along the smooth sward
accompanied me,
my sister to the churchyard,

but she who nurtured me,
my mother dear,
to our common home country.

XXXIX

Of me, a mere lad, abroad they spread it
that I could not sing any songs.
If I were to open my musical box
and sing a choice of my songs,
from Tilsit city to Karaliauchus*
I should be singing my songs,
and should I not last out singing my songs,
I should take to humming tunes,
and should I not last out humming tunes,
I should take to piping my pipes.

* Koenigsberg.

XL

Chuchia, Iulia, little one,
little babe, little son,
grow to be big,
make haste, make haste!

Chuchia, Iulia, little one,
buy your mother a new gown
and your sister a ring,
a golden ring and a bush of rue!

Chuchia, Iulia, little one,
would with your rearing I had done!
Would I had taught you how to work!
Then you could go and cut the hay
and make bread for your mother.

XLI

O mother Sun, to us here, to us here!
O father cloud, to Prussia, to Prussia!
Prussia's hills are alight with flames;
our hills are running with streams,
o mother Sun!

O mother, Sun, have pity on us here!
O father cloud, travel to Prussia!
In Prussia's meadows the grass is in flames;
in our meadows all is in streams,
o mother Sun!

Blow, wind, blow the cloud from us here
to Prussia!

Bear, o wind, the rain from us here to
Prussia!

We have had enough of rain!
Oh let there be sun again,
o mother Sun!

The cloud travelled to Prussia, to Prussia;
again the Sun began to shine for us here,
for us here.

O mother Sun,
us thou hadst pity on,
o mother Sun!

Already clover grows along the fieldway,
the fieldway,
and the warm Sun gives heat during the
day, the day.

O mother Sun,
us thou hadst pity on,
o mother Sun!

XLII

Presage summoned, presage guided,
barefoot I ran to the hill,
and when I had climbed the hill
I beheld three fishermen.
'Say, have you seen my brother
on the deep seas?'
'In them, maiden lilly white,
your brother perhaps lies drowned
upon the bottom of the seas.
Sand will have gnawn his visage;
waves will have whitened his locks.'
'You divers, my dear neighbours,
will you fish out my brother
from the bottom of the seas?'
'If we should, what would you give us?'
'A silk girdle I'd give to one,
to another a golden ring,

but I have nothing for the third.
Wait, I'll promise myself
as a wife to the young helmsman.
A helmsman is a skilled fellow,
one who knows to sail a craft
both with the wind and against it.'

XLIII

O thou oak tree,
tree so green,
why this autumn
art not green?

How this autumn
should I be green?
I heard coming
woodcutters twain.

Many a branch
the first one lopped off,
and my summit
the second chopped off.

From this tree's branches
I'll make a bed.
I'll bend a cradling
from this tree's head.

I myself will lay me
on that same bed,
and in the cradling
I'll swing a maid,

half the day through
till breakfast tide.
Oh chuchia, Iulia,
my very own bride!

XLIV

Oh there were wonders,
great wonders there were,
for in mid summer
frozen was the mere!

How the chestnut steed
to drink should I lead?
How should I scrub
the lime wood tub?

The Fates decreed then
a sunny day,
and the ice on the mere
melted away.

Now the chestnut steed
to drink I'll lead;
now I will scrub
the lime wood tub.

From gentle folk my brother
purchased his steed;
from beyond the hill
a girl he did wed.

Oh wherefore cried
the maiden bride?
Oh wherefore neighed
the chestnut steed?

The steed is neighing
for oats green.

. The maiden is crying
for days that have been.

XLV

Mother, you my life giver, you my nur-
terer, thanks be to those arms you lifted me
up with, thanks be to those legs you carried
me about on, thanks be to that mind which
I learnt beauty from, thanks be to those lips
which spoke to me with love!

Who with love will speak to me now?
Who will instruct me with love? Mother,
who will protect me? Whom shall I confide
in now? Whom shall I converse with? Let
the cuckoo stop moaning in the wood! I
shall never stop, never.

Mother, you do not cry! Mother, you
do not sigh even! Mother, answer if only a
syllable and comfort my miserable heart.

All night I tried to make you speak, mother,
but I was not able to.

Mother, you were but a guest here.
Mother, you were but a traveller here. Alas,
for my mother already they have built the
white-planked house without window and
without door. No more will you behold the
Sun rise and the Sun set.

For the last time now, for the last hour
now we two have conversed. Oh that I had
power to give you life again!

When will you come back to me, when
visit me? From which direction shall I wait
you? From what corner go to meet you?
Mother, day long, night long I shall wander
up and down but you I shall never meet,
never find.

XLVI

O My God, where shall we dwell who have no mother?

Mother, cherished one, to what purpose did you bear us babes? Many nights you did not sleep, bearing us babes.

Mother, cherished one, do you still not hear how we, poor orphans, like cuckoos, mourn you?

Bend, mother, at least one of your fingers for us, look at us with at least one of your eyes and hear with at least one of your ears how your poor orphans, like cuckoos, mourn you.

What shall we lean against for help? We might lean against some tree trunk, but

a tree has boughs. We might lean against some ice block, but ice is cold. We might lean against a fence, but winds blow from everywhere, everywhere rain falls. We might lean against the other side, but all with words will offend us, all point at us with their fingers.

Mother, cherished one, through sorrow we swim as a duckling through water. But a duckling can swim, can swim to the shore of the lake. How can we young orphans swim out of our sorrow?

Cuckoos with autumn have to stop their dirge, but we, poor young orphans, never shall cease from ours. Mourning, we shall mourn on.

XLVII

Husband, you my stand by, 'tis true
you were no close-palined fence, yet some
cover against the wind you proved.

Husband, you my source of information
you my whole conversation, oh whom shall
I converse with now? By day time with the
wind, by night time with the walls.

Husband, when you were mine, I had
not to open the door of the courtyard. Hus-
band, as soon as you put foot in the church-
yard, the door of the courtyard I had to
open.

Husband, bereft of you, I am left with
our children. And your little son, who shall
teach him the labours of the field? Instruc-
ted by outsiders, they will be sad of heart.

Husband, give thanks to your fellow villagers for this lament, for this singing.

They carry you away now to a house without window and without door, your fatherland for eternity. Will you remove those white boards, those wan sods?

Little son, would you recognise your father, if he came back?

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